

July 29, 2021

Press Release

JMI organises Online Lecture on Afghanistan: Emerging Geopolitics and Regional Implications

The MMAJ Academy of International Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia(JMI) organised an Online Lecture on “Afghanistan: Emerging Geopolitics and Regional Implications” on 28 July 2021. Dr. Avinash Paliwal, Senior Lecturer in International Relations, and Deputy Director, South Asia Institute at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, delivered the lecture.

Prof. Ajay Darshan Behera, Officiating Director, MMAJ-AIS welcomed the speaker and the participants. In his initial remarks he introduced the theme of the lecture and underlined how the Taliban has risen and fallen from power periodically. The geo-political impact of this pattern for the region is forcing India to engage at “multiple tracks” with “all stakeholders.”

Dr. Paliwal divided his lecture into four broad sections - The Islamic Republic versus the Islamic Emirate, Pakistan and the Future of Afghanistan, Regional Powers: China, Russia, Iran & Central Asia and Implications for India.

Analyzing the recent military offensive of the Taliban, Dr. Paliwal was skeptical that the Taliban was in position to exert territorial control of the main cities and Kabul. The strategy of the Taliban seems to be rather to squeeze the Afghan government of its resources by taking control of the border posts and reduce the inflow of resources. The Taliban is aiming at a political collapse of the Afghan government and not a military takeover - and this is not just strategy but also a survival mechanism. After the complete withdrawal of US forces by 31 August, it will be important to understand who has the real negotiations power – whether in Doha or elsewhere.

With respect to the role of regional powers, he believed that Iran would prefer leverage on the Taliban independent of Pakistan, while Russia and China may desire an inclusive government in Kabul. China will be driven by the key concerns to put an end to China-centric militant groups and ensure the security of its financial investment through economic projects are secure. Pakistan continues to have many proxies in the Taliban but it is difficult to

surmise what would be its policy should it rise in power. Hence, Pakistan's leverage with Taliban may not last since the nature of the insurgency is fragmented.

Analyzing India's options in Afghanistan, Dr. Paliwal, was of the opinion that if India is serious about limiting Chinese influence in Afghanistan, and ensuring a balance between Kabul and Islamabad, it has no choice but to engage with the Taliban. India should try and use the backchannel with Pakistan to assess and reshape the latter's threshold for Indian presence in Afghanistan. Pakistan is worried about a backlash and may not be able to contain the Taliban's desire for a stable relationship with New Delhi. This would offer India some space for manoeuvring its policy in the near future.

The lecture was well attended by participants from all across India. It was followed by a question-and-answer session where a number of questions were raised by the participants. Prof. Behera thanked the speaker for the insightful lecture and the participants for their enthusiastic involvement.

Public Relations Office

Jamia Millia Islamia

Ajay Darshan Be...
Cohost, me



Avinash Paliwal [↑]

Shahid Tasleem
Host



Islamic Republic vs. Islamic Emirate

The Republican Camp:

- 2004 Constitution
- Palace politics: Ghani vs. 'The Rest'
- State-Warlord/Powerbroker Relations
- Capacities of the ANDSF

The Taliban Camp:

- 1964 Constitution?
- Shura politics: Political vs. Military shura
- Haqqanis vs. Quetta Shura
- Relations with LeT, JeM, IMU, and AQ

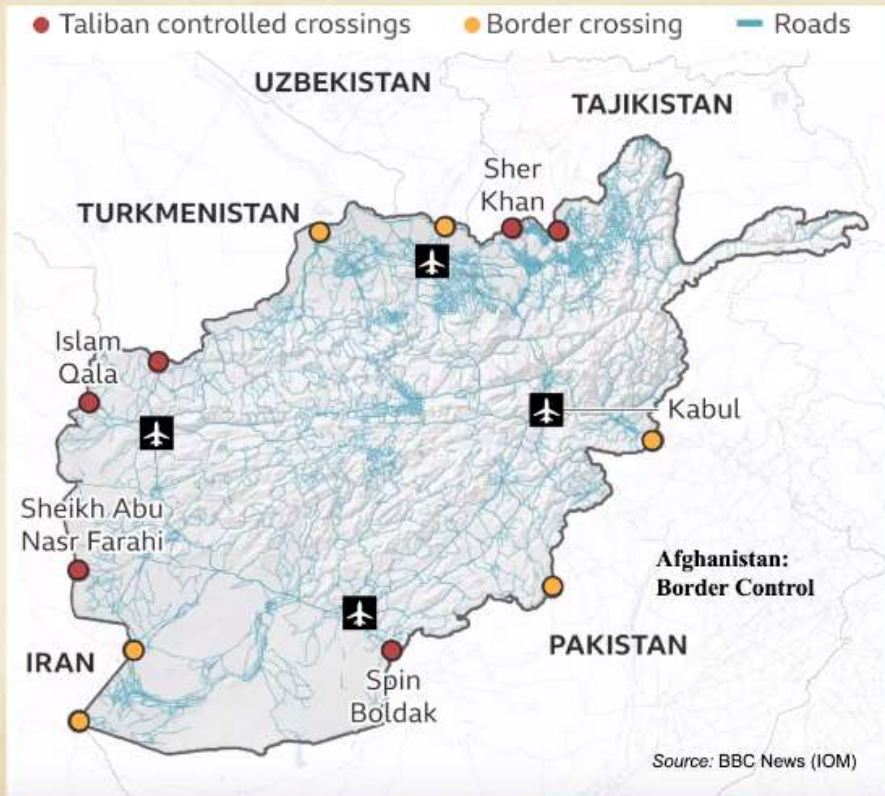


Ajay Darshan Be...
Cohost, me



Avinash Paliwal

Shahid Tasleem
Host

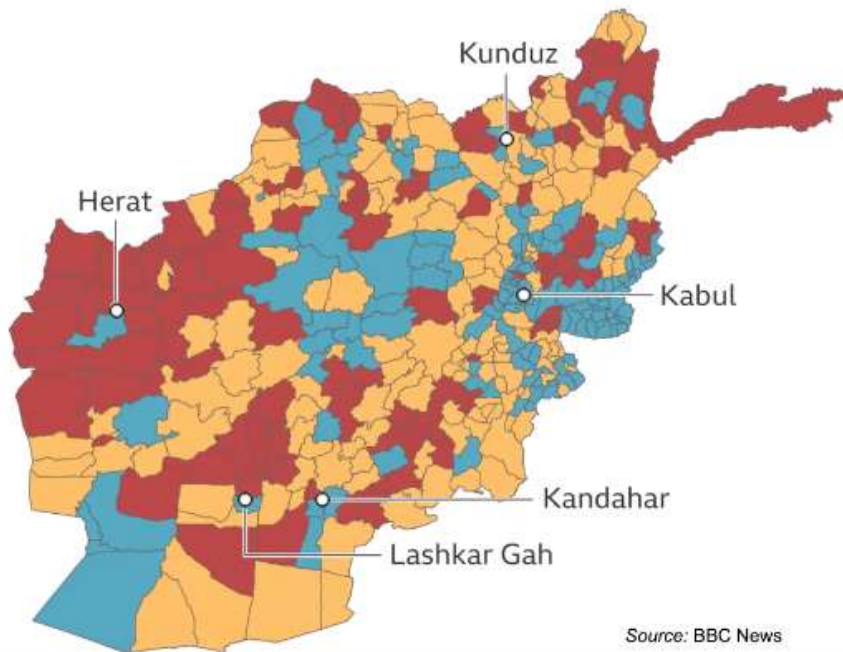


Ajay Darshan Be...
Cohost, me



Who's in control in Afghanistan?

■ Taliban control ■ Government control ■ Contested*



Source: BBC News